



## **A Technical Assistance Panel Report**

### **Wheaton Central Business District**

Sponsored by:  
Maryland Department of Transportation,  
Office of Planning and Capital  
Programming

September 23-24, 2009

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A Technical Assistance Panel Report

ULI Washington  
4909 Cordell Avenue  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
(240) 497-1919  
Fax: (240) 497-1818  
[www.washington.uli.org](http://www.washington.uli.org)

## About ULI Washington

### A District Council of the Urban Land Institute

ULI Washington is a district council of ULI—the Urban Land Institute, a nonprofit education and research organization supported by its members. Founded in 1936, the Institute today has over 34,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use planning and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service.

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better communities.

ULI's mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI Washington carries out the ULI mission locally by sharing best practices, building consensus, and advancing solutions through its educational programs and community outreach initiatives.

## About the Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Program

The objective of ULI Washington's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program is to provide expert, multidisciplinary advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and nonprofit organizations in the Washington Metropolitan area. Drawing from its extensive membership base, ULI Washington conducts one and one-half day panels offering objective and responsible advice to local decision makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues.

#### **Robert M. Pinkard**

Chair, ULI Washington;  
Principal, The Pinkard Group

#### **Lisa W. Rother**

Executive Director  
ULI Washington

#### **Patricia A. Harris**

Chair, Technical Assistance Panel Program;  
Partner, Holland & Knight, LLP

#### **Jason L. Stuart**

Director of Community Outreach  
ULI Washington

#### **Yolanda Cole**

Vice-Chair, Technical Assistance Panel Program;  
Principal, Hickok Cole Architects

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# Acknowledgments

Both personally and on behalf of the Urban Land Institute Washington District Council (ULI Washington), the panel members and project staff would like to thank the Maryland Department of Transportation, Office of Planning and Capital Programming; the Office of Planning and Development, Montgomery County Department of General Services; and the Wheaton Redevelopment Program, for collaboratively inviting ULI Washington to Wheaton, in order to assist their efforts in redeveloping the central business district (CBD) of the area. Specifically, the panel would like to thank Gary Stith, Deputy Director, Montgomery County Department of General Services; Rob Klein, Director, Wheaton Redevelopment Program; and Pete McGinnity, Business Development & Intergovernmental Program Manager, Wheaton Redevelopment Program, for their work in initiating the Panel, preparing the briefing materials, touring the panel around the study area and providing on-site support, thereby ensuring that the panel was well-prepared prior to their arrival, and well-briefed and supported once they began working.

The panel would also like to thank Nancy Fox and Tim Thornton of Bay Area Economics, for their presentation to the panel, with preliminary findings from their market analysis of the region, and Kathleen Guinan, Executive Director, Crossway Community, Inc., and her entire staff, who hosted the panel during their work, and also provided the meeting facilities for the public sessions.

Finally, the panel was also very grateful to have the benefit of input from the many other stakeholders and neighborhood residents who attended the opening and/or closing sessions of the panel, as listed below:

Khalid Afzal	Montgomery County Planning Dept., Community Based Planning
Greg Baker	Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee
Marcia Bond	Resident
Bob Burns	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
Natalie Cantor	Mid-County Regional Services Center
Sidney Cooper	Wheaton Urban District
Brian DiNunno	Resident
Marian Fryer	Wheaton Urban Development Advisory Committee
Darren Glasgow	BF Saul Company
Brian Greenan	Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
Susanne Humphrey	Resident
Gary Johnson	Wheaton Regional Park Neighborhood Association
Sam Jones	University of Maryland
Chris Lindsay	Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee
Gary Malasky	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
Tom Martin	Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee
Robin McIlhenny	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
Amber Parcher	The Gazette
Kim Persaud	Wheaton Regional Park Neighborhood Association

Susan Petersen	Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee
Michele Rosenfeld	Business Owner representative
Virginia Sheard	Kensington View
Paula Sternberg	Latino Economic Development Corporation
Sandy Tallant	Montgomery County Planning Dept., Community Based Planning

The findings and recommendations provided in this report are based on the collective expertise of the panel, along with the briefing materials, and information gleaned from the tour, stakeholder presentations, and roundtable discussions conducted during the panel's one and one-half day effort. ULI Washington hopes that the following information will contribute to the efforts already underway to maximize the potential of Wheaton and enliven its Central Business District, while at the same time preserving its unique character.



*Panelists meet with residents and community stakeholders at the beginning of the TAP process*

# ULI Washington Panel and Project Staff

## Panel Chair

David W. Kitchens  
Principal  
Cooper Carry, Inc.  
Alexandria, VA

## Panel Members

Robert E. Brosnan  
Planning Director  
Arlington County, Department of  
Community Planning  
Arlington, VA

Grant Ehat  
Principal  
JBG Rosenfeld  
Chevy Chase, MD

Marisa G. Flowers  
Managing Partner  
Green Door Advisors, LLC  
Washington, DC

Calvin Gladney  
Managing Partner  
Mosaic Urban Partners  
Washington, DC

Elisa L. Hill  
President  
Elisa Hill & Associates  
Upper Marlboro, MD

Tennille Smith Parker  
Program Analyst  
City of Falls Church, Housing & Human  
Services  
Falls Church, VA

Trini Rodriguez  
Principal  
ParkerRodriguez, Inc.  
Alexandria, VA

Campbell Smith  
Vice President, Development  
Management  
Trammell Crow Company  
Washington, DC

Michael Stevens  
Executive Director  
Capitol Riverfront Business  
Improvement District (BID)  
Washington, DC

Yolanda Takesian  
Associate Planner  
Kittelsohn & Associates, Inc.  
Baltimore, MD

## Project Staff

Jason L. Stuart  
Director of Community Outreach,  
ULI Washington  
Bethesda, MD

## Foreword: Overview and Panel Assignment<sup>1</sup>

Wheaton is an unincorporated, urbanized area situated in the southeastern portion of Montgomery County. It lies less than 2 miles north of the National Capital Beltway (Rte. 495), 3.6 miles north of downtown Silver Spring and is 4.1 miles north of the District of Columbia. Wheaton is 6.3 miles southeast of Rockville, the County seat. Less than 1 mile to the east is the incorporated Town of Kensington and the unincorporated area of Four Corners lies 3.2 miles to the west. Three State highways transect the Wheaton Central Business District (CBD): MD-97 (Georgia Avenue), MD-193 (University Boulevard), and MD-586 (Veirs Mill Road). These three roadways create the boundary for the core of the CBD.

The Wheaton CBD is maintained by the Wheaton Urban District. The Wheaton Urban District provides special services to the CBD to ensure that downtown Wheaton is maintained in a clean, safe and attractive manner to promote a vibrant social and business environment and long-term economic viability. These services include security, streetscape maintenance, tree maintenance, sidewalk repairs, marketing, and events.

The Wheaton CBD also includes one of Montgomery County's Parking Lot Districts. This designation insures adequate, convenient levels of parking through on-street, surface and structured parking throughout the CBD.

The County has made a number of improvements to the Wheaton CBD. Over 50,160 square feet of new sidewalks, lighting and landscaping/plantings have been constructed along Grandview Avenue, Ennalls Avenue, Fern Street and Georgia Avenue. Additional streetscaping is planned for Fern Street as well as a portion of University Boulevard from Veirs Mill Rd. to Georgia Avenue. A pedestrian walkway has recently been constructed that connects Georgia Avenue and Triangle Lane. Façade improvements have included multiple properties on Grandview Avenue, Georgia Avenue and Ennalls Avenue. Additional façade improvements are planned for Fern Street, Elkin Street and the south side of University Boulevard, between Veirs Mill Road and Georgia Avenue.

No public schools are situated within the boundaries of the CBD. However, four high schools, four middle schools and six elementary schools are within a two-mile radius of its center. The 536-acre Wheaton Regional Park, is less than two miles northwest of the Wheaton CBD. The park contains Brookside Gardens, whose award-winning horticultural displays attract over 400,000 people annually. County government facilities are both within, and proximate, to the Wheaton CBD. The Mid-County Regional Services Center is situated in the CBD, one block north of the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Veirs Mill Road. The Wheaton Library, one of the most active in the County's library system, and the Wheaton Community Center, operated by the

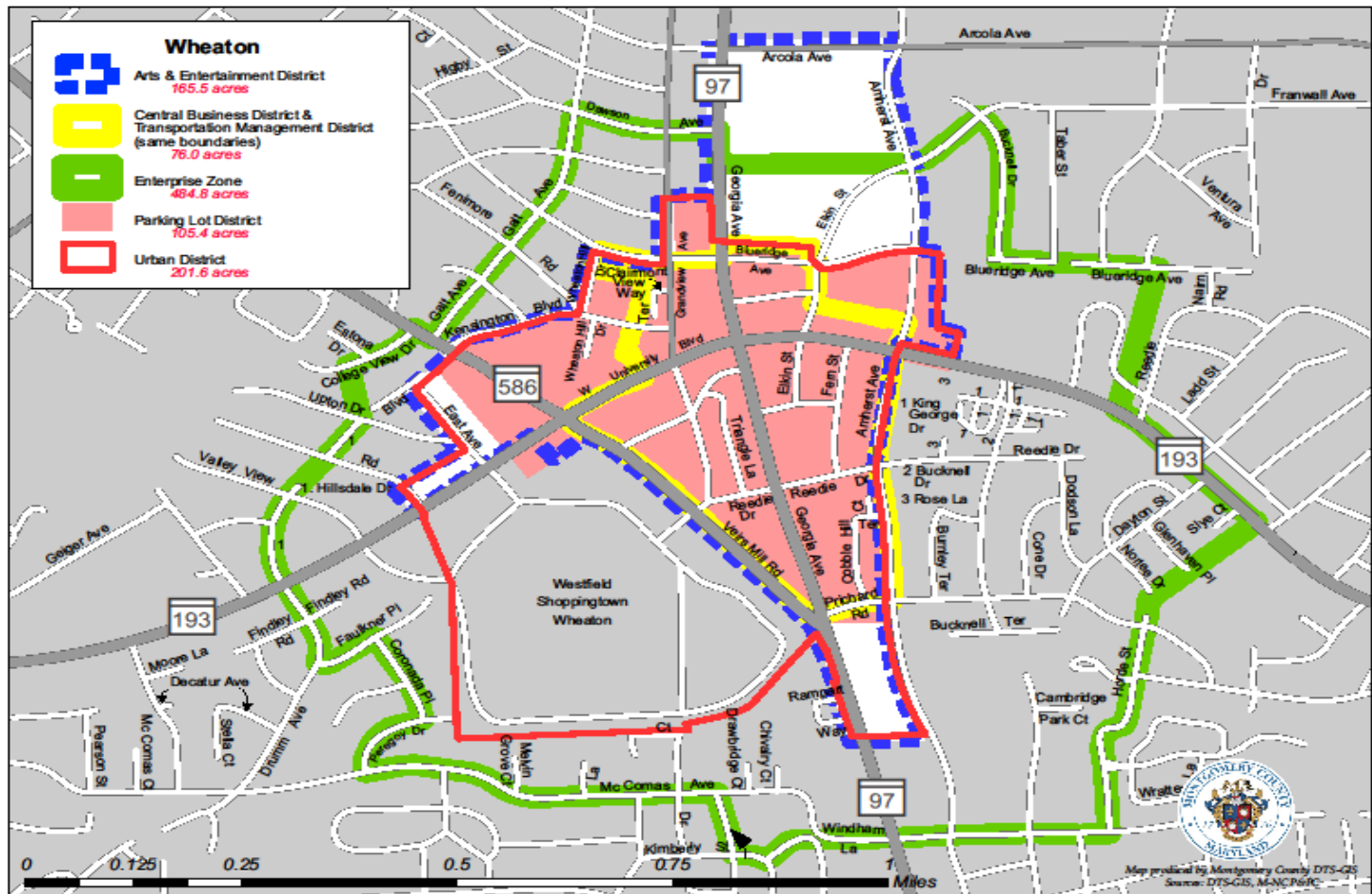
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<sup>1</sup> The information in the Foreword: Overview and Panel Assignment section of this report is excerpted from the Briefing Book that was provided by the panel sponsor.



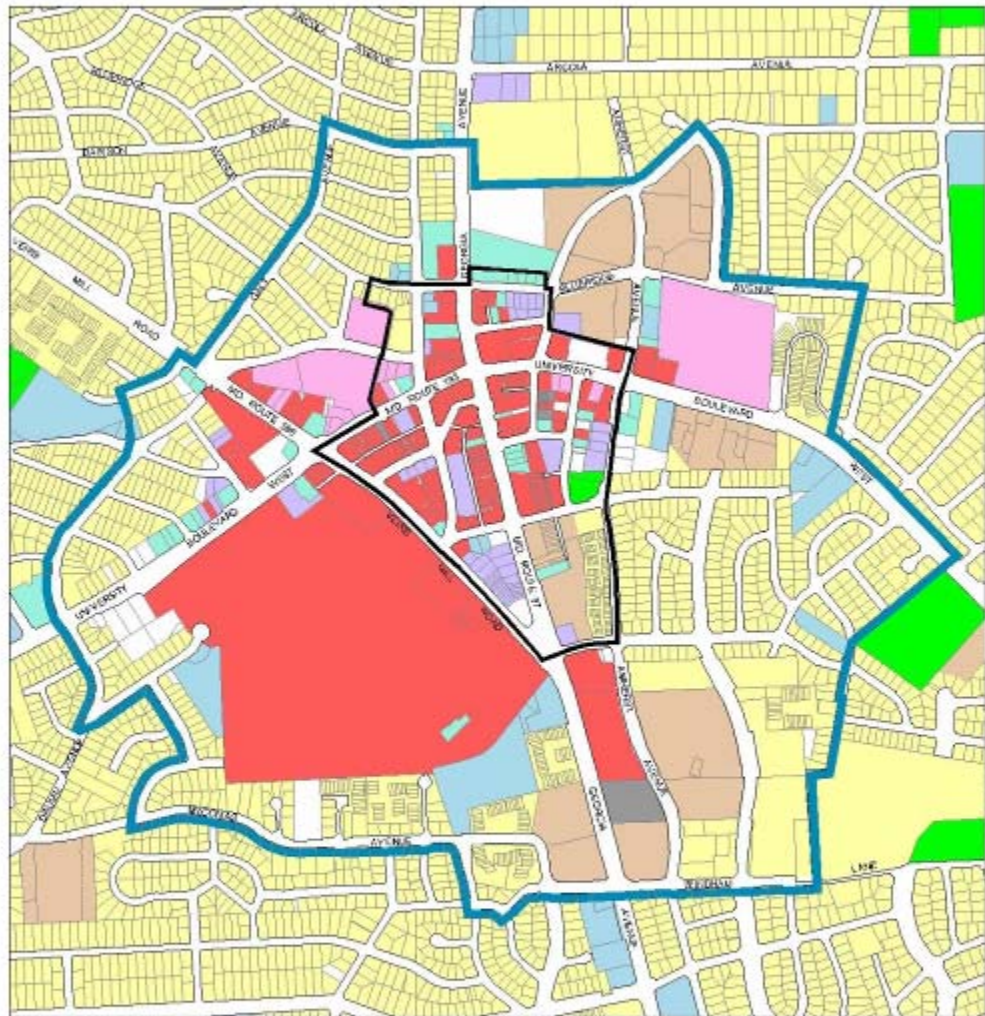
Department of Recreation, are adjacent to each other on Georgia Avenue. These lie just one block from the Wheaton CBD's northern boundary.

The Wheaton CBD is approximately 76 acres and its boundaries are illustrated in the following graphic, as are the boundaries of the Parking Lot District, Urban District, Enterprise Zone, and Arts & Entertainment District, which all serve this area.

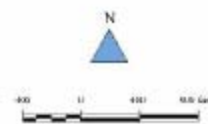


As the map below illustrates, the CBD - outlined in black, is almost exclusively devoted to retail use and parking. Prior to 2004, the CBD contained almost no residential uses. Since then, approximately 1,300 residential units have been constructed or are being planned. While office space is sparsely distributed through the Urban District, less than 225,000 square feet of office space is situated within the boundaries of the Wheaton Urban District.

## EXISTING LAND USE



- |                                    |               |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT BOUNDARY | VACANT        |
| SECTOR PLAN BOUNDARY               | INSTITUTIONAL |
| SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL          | PARKING       |
| MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL           | UTILITIES     |
| OFFICE                             | INDUSTRIAL    |
| RETAIL                             |               |
| PARKLAND                           |               |

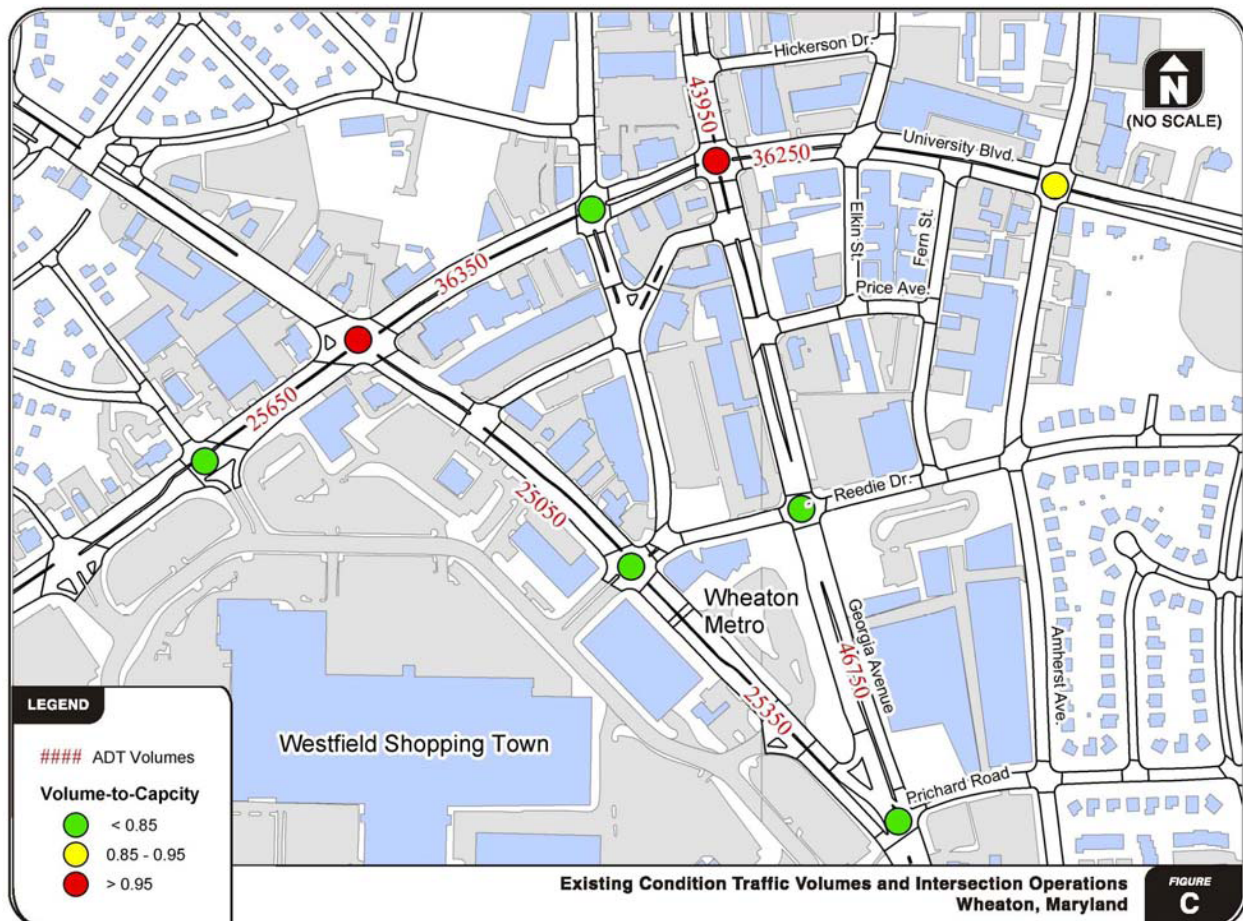


Wheaton Sector Plan



## Transportation and Accessibility

The Wheaton Metro Station opened in 1990. Adjacent to the Metro an intermodal transit center was constructed. The site houses 11 bus bays and provides connectivity between the Metro Red Line, nine County “Ride On” bus routes and eight Metro bus routes. WMATA is currently in the process of a Station Access Study for Wheaton’s transit center and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation is currently studying the implementation of bus rapid-transit lines that would use Wheaton’s transit center as one of its hubs. The Wheaton station is currently a major transit center with over 900 bus trips, 5,000 bus boardings and 4,500 rail boardings. On an average weekday Wheaton Metro Station serves an average of 9,300 rail passengers daily. In terms of vehicular traffic, the diagram below demonstrates the average daily volumes for the main thoroughfares.



(Source: Kittelson and Associates, Inc. - Wheaton Metro Station Area Pedestrian Safety Evaluation, November 2004)

### Statement of the problem:

While Montgomery County has had some success with the redevelopment of downtown Wheaton, the core of the CBD has not changed significantly and the community is not satisfied with the progress that has been made. Montgomery County is working with Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) to solicit a private development partner to redevelop the core of the CBD through a public-private partnership using County- and WMATA-owned properties. The answers to several key questions would help the County and the private partner create a viable plan for this area of Wheaton.

### Questions to be addressed by the panel:

- 1) Identify the most viable market opportunities for the redevelopment of Wheaton which will allow Wheaton to be differentiated in the regional market and create its own identity. What **market niche makes sense for Wheaton?** Is there an **office market for new construction?** And are there special **cultural, educational, or entertainment uses that would spark reinvestment?** How can the County, WMATA, and the State of Maryland attract private investment in these opportunities? **What will the public sector have to do to make this happen?**
- 2) Identify ideas for the **integration of the WMATA property and the County property for redevelopment** of the Core while still **accommodating bus bays and circulation** near Metro.
- 3) What are the greatest **challenges to overcome** for the redevelopment of downtown Wheaton and what are the **strengths to build on?** This kind of question has been addressed before, but the panel's unique perspective is requested.
- 4) Westfield Wheaton Mall has a significant draw in the market. However parking structures, a major arterial and the internal orientation of the mall **create a separation between the mall and the downtown area and Metro.** How can a **stronger connection and synergy between the mall and downtown and Metro** be created through such things as physical changes, improved pedestrian connectivity, development along Veirs Mill Road, shared parking, coordination of marketing, etc.?
- 5) **Small local retail businesses create a unique character** for downtown Wheaton that **reflects the diversity and ethnicity** of the community. How can the viable **local retail businesses be retained** along with the character they create while **allowing redevelopment to occur?**

# Market Potential

In seeking to identify the best market niche for Wheaton within the context of the many other activity centers in the region, the panel spent a significant amount of time discussing the area's strengths and weaknesses. Fortunately—and unlike many areas seeking to redevelop—Wheaton already possesses a number of inherent strengths. Moreover, due to the large number of CBD parcels that are publicly-owned, and the laudable cooperation between Montgomery County and WMATA to make all those parcels available for a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for redevelopment, there are multiple opportunities to “make something happen” here. Given the number of charrettes and other planning exercises in which citizens of the Wheaton community have dutifully participated over the years, the panel certainly understands the motivation behind wanting redevelopment to occur both sooner rather than later, and for it to include as large and all-encompassing of a project as possible: what some might call a signature project, or a game-changer. However, because the panel did take such careful note of both the strengths and weaknesses of the area, the panel concluded that an all-encompassing project was inadvisable.

Wheaton does indeed have several unique assets that can be built upon, and positive redevelopment activity is already occurring. On the other hand, Wheaton has not yet “proven itself to the market,” and also faces a number of issues regarding its street grid and overall connectivity. Furthermore, some of Wheaton's strengths, such as its eclectic retail mix, are also quite fragile, and could be irreparably harmed by any redevelopment projects that are ill-conceived or rushed. Thus, the panel recommends a gradual approach to redevelopment, focused initially on nurturing the strengths and addressing the challenges outlined below. Such an approach allows Wheaton's identity to continue to emerge organically, rather than through an attempt to force a desired result—something which the panel strongly feels would not only fail, but would also end up undermining the unique identity that Wheaton already possesses.

## Strengths

Diverse Culture. The panel was immediately struck by the diversity of the population in the Wheaton CBD, with a 2005 U.S. Census Survey showing a CBD population of 4,850 persons that is 18.4% Hispanic or Latino, 35.4% White Non-Hispanic, 23.2% Black, 20.6% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 4.1% representing another race. Such diversity is not only reflected in the retail mix, a strength that is discussed next, but also makes the area interesting and better able to promote itself as a unique destination, with festivals and other activities celebrating its culture. Given the number of other activity centers within the region that are also competing for new investment, residents, and employment, such diversity, if properly nurtured and promoted as the strength that it is, enables Wheaton to set itself apart from some of its economic competitors. Of course, cultural diversity can also lead to differing views within a community on issues related to development, such as what types of retailers should be pursued, or how public space should be programmed. As discussed in greater detail later in this report, however, the

panel is convinced that Wheaton is well-positioned to capitalize on its diversity, rather than be divided by it.

Eclectic retail mix. Wheaton's diversity is reflected in its retail mix, with both national chains represented in the Wheaton Westfield Mall, and smaller, local, and in many instances ethnic retailers represented on the streets. Furthermore, the importance of Chuck Levin's Washington Music Center as a key constituent of this mix cannot be overstated, and the panel thinks there are a number of opportunities to leverage these strengths even more, as shall be discussed later in the report. Tying all this retail together is a major challenge, but the most important thing to note is that the ingredients are already there. As is true with any smaller businesses, though, great care must be taken to "first do no harm": these businesses are often operating on a very thin margin, and as a result they, and the unique retail environment they provide, must not be taken for granted. The panel commends the Wheaton Redevelopment Program and other county and state agencies, as well as non-profits such as the Latino Economic Development Corporation, for their actions in support of this retail mix, including the ongoing streetscape and façade improvements, and the Small Business Development Center.

Double-sided retail. Many of the retail establishments can be easily accessed from both the front and the rear, particularly in the case of those establishments fronting Georgia Avenue that have the county parking lot behind them; this makes the buildings more interesting, enables them to be closer to the street, and also doubles the benefits that they provide in terms of placing "eyes on the street" and adding vibrancy.



*Rear section of double-sided retail (front facing Georgia Avenue), with recent façade improvements shown.*

Regional shopping draw.

Although the mall certainly poses a number of challenges as well, it is undeniably a magnet for shoppers, bringing consumers and their purchasing power in to Wheaton. Nor does the mall need to be perceived as a detriment to the eclectic, independent retail discussed above; smaller retailers benefit from the spinoff effects of the foot-traffic generated by larger, more established chains.

Existing parking districts; other special districts. With a number of County- and WMATA-owned parking garages and lots, Wheaton has plenty of available parking, which could provide an important benefit and incentive to future development. Unfortunately, some

of these existing parking facilities currently act as pedestrian barriers and/or are underutilized, but with the addition of design improvements and well-placed projects around these facilities they can be both better utilized and better connected. The ability to manage this parking as a cohesive system via the parking district should also facilitate this process. Similarly, the many other special districts in the area, including the Urban District, Enterprise Zone, and Arts & Entertainment District, all have the potential to serve as useful incentives, although the panel is unsure as to whether they are currently publicized and utilized to their full potential, as shall be discussed in the Implementation section.

Hub for Metrorail, Metrobus, and Ride On As noted in the introduction, Wheaton is a major transfer center, and given the trends toward an increased desire for transit-oriented living and working, the area is very fortunate to have this transit infrastructure. The system is currently underutilized, to be sure (as indicated by the 4,500 daily rail boardings, which places Wheaton in the bottom half of Metro stations) but given the ample opportunities for new development and improved connectivity discussed in this report, this number can be easily increased.

Geographic location. Wheaton's proximity to employment centers in both Silver Spring and Downtown D.C., particularly via Metrorail, enables it to market itself as a feasible residential location for those seeking a manageable commute, particularly given its relative affordability. This is, of course, a double-edged sword, in that Wheaton's location outside the Beltway makes it a less-competitive location for office and other uses than other more well-developed and concentrated centers.

Affordable. Considering it is only two Metro stops farther out on the Red Line than Silver Spring, and boasts a number of amenities, including those outlined above, Wheaton remains relatively affordable. As noted in the preliminary findings of the recent Bay Area Economics market analysis, rents near Wheaton Metro station for new 1- and 2-bedroom apartment units average \$1.50 to \$2.15 per square foot, and thereby offer value and convenience advantages relative to their Silver Spring competition, which have generally higher rents per square foot (\$2.00/SF and up), and which are in many instances not as close to the Metro station. Considering that even many young professionals are beginning to be priced out of the Silver Spring market, Wheaton provides a welcome alternative, particularly once some of the other improvements recommended in this report and elsewhere begin to be implemented.

Strong livable neighborhoods and vested/involved community. Surrounding the CBD, Wheaton maintains a stable and well-kept residential character. The Wheaton Regional Park, a major amenity, is also just over a mile north and west of the CBD, adding an important recreational element to the fabric of the area. Moreover, as evidenced by the participation of so many community members in the various planning processes that have taken place for Wheaton, members are informed, engaged and interested in the future of their community.



## Challenges

Auto-dominant design of road network. The preference given to moving traffic through the district on main arterial roads and the discontinuous/disjointed secondary road network is immediately clear, and as is the case with other communities that came of age during the same era, roads and the automobiles they serve dominate Wheaton, while pedestrians and other users, such as bicyclists, are secondary. This challenge unfortunately does much to undermine what should be the benefit of having a Metrorail station, as discussed in the next point.

Accessibility to METRO. The fact that Wheaton has an underground Metro station is very positive, but having to cross five and six lane roads to get to it is not; on some streets, you practically have to run to get across. Similarly, the large parking garages and lots that serve the mall, as well as the WMATA garage itself, also inhibit easy pedestrian access to Metro, as evidenced by the fact that fewer than a quarter of those riding Metrorail from Wheaton access the station via walking or bicycling, as opposed to more than half who do so in Silver Spring, according to WMATA's Daily Metrorail Boardings by Station and Mode of Access, 2005 (the most recent figures readily available).



*Even some of our fleet-of-foot panelists were marooned while attempting to cross the street on Viers Mill Road*

Scattered, ineffective office and retail space. As discussed above, Wheaton's retail is diverse, but it is also somewhat scattered; this is even more true for its stock of office space. Both retail and office tenants prefer locations where they are more concentrated. Unfortunately, this challenge cannot be easily remedied—at least in the case of office space—by simply adding more space on one or more of the available parcels, due to the next challenge listed.

Difficult location for office. The panel heard from a number of stakeholders that there is a desire for more office space in the CBD, in order to bring in greater daytime foot traffic, and to achieve other goals. Similarly, the panel fully recognizes all the benefits



which accrue from a good housing/jobs balance and a 24/7, or at least an 18/7, environment. Nonetheless, simply hoping for something to be true does not make it so, and the panel is unanimous in its belief that Wheaton is not well-positioned to attract development of, or users for, new large-scale office space. There are simply too many other office centers within the region that possess greater strengths, particularly in the near-term, where so much new office space has recently been built. In the words of one panelist, “There is no inherent reason for office to be here.” As discussed below, there are some opportunities for small, professional office space, however.

Safety perceptions. Although none of the panelists perceived any safety issues during their time in Wheaton, they did hear concerns regarding this issue from some of the stakeholders. During tours of the mall, and on the streets of the CBD, private security and the Urban District’s ambassadors, respectively, were present and noticeable, which was positive. Such safety concerns can be mitigated in part by the addition of more residents and infrastructure improvements that encourage more walking, adding more people on the street.

Public space lighting. Some of the panelists did note some gaps in the lighting of public spaces, the improvement of which could alleviate some of the concerns expressed in the previous point.

Potential lack of coordination among business organizations. Although the panel is impressed by the number of organizations and groups working on behalf of the Wheaton CBD, and views these resources as an undeniable strength, it was not made perfectly clear to the panel what distinct niche each organization occupies or how they align their efforts for maximum effect, which leads the panel to believe that developers or other businesses seeking to invest in the Wheaton CBD—or even current businesses seeking assistance—could face similar confusion.

Lack of effective branding. What is Wheaton’s story and what makes it a unique, interesting place to live, visit, work, develop, and invest? After spending a day and a half in the community touring, talking to residents and other stakeholders, and visiting local businesses, the panel was able to appreciate that such a distinct identity does indeed exist, but it does not seem that that identity has been encapsulated in a form that can be quickly digested by visitors or those outside the community, nor that such “selling” is taking place.

Fragmented property ownership. As mentioned previously, it is fortunate that there are a number of publicly-held parcels, and that WMATA and the County are committed to working with the community to help effect a shared vision, but there are many individual property owners who will need to be on board. This is frequently the case with any area seeking to redevelop, however, and is certainly not insurmountable.

Not all members of community involved in planning. Given the diversity of Wheaton, it is essential that all segments of the population be well-represented in the public planning process. This does not currently appear to be the case, as neither the Latino community

nor the residents of the new multi-family projects (who are generally younger than those in the more established residential areas) were represented in proportional numbers in the public meetings held by the panel. There are of course many factors which explain this lack of representation, and the ULI TAP process itself is not immune from fault, as our public sessions take place from 5:00-6:30 on weeknights, when some of these community members may still be working or otherwise unable to attend. Nonetheless, special efforts must be made to include all members of the community in planning for the future, in order for the process to succeed.

Constructing on WMATA parcels. While it is true that having Metrorail and/or Metrobus facilities immediately adjacent to or underneath one's property is an unparalleled benefit in our region, it also creates a host of challenges to any developer in terms of the need to maintain parking and bus operations and otherwise build to WMATA standards. Such challenges limit the number of developers who may respond to an RFQ issued for WMATA property, unless, of course, the market is so appealing and the benefits that may accrue to the developer appear substantial enough to make the additional burdens worthwhile. In the absence of such a well-proven market, a smaller pool of respondents may lead to less than the optimal result for the property, and given the declining store of undeveloped WMATA parcels, would be a major opportunity lost.

Isolation and single-use of mall. The panel was grateful that the Westfield Wheaton Mall management provided their input in to the TAP process, and appreciated the fact that the mall management truly does seek to be an active, supportive member of the community. Moreover, the panel understands the challenges facing the entire retail industry, and especially the enclosed mall sector, thereby forcing them to focus almost exclusively on mere survival in the near-term. This does not negate the fact, however, that the mall is an island unto itself in Wheaton, and does not connect well to its surroundings. Unfortunately, the problem appears to have been exacerbated by the garage that was built with public support for the Macy's, as well as by the WMATA garage, which creates an imposing barrier between the mall and the CBD.

### **Best Bets for Redevelopment**

In light of the strengths and weaknesses outlined above, the panel believes that the following uses have the greatest likelihood of success, while also providing the best complement to Wheaton's existing urban fabric:

Multi-family and townhome developments. Clearly there is a residential market in the Wheaton CBD. One entire new block has already been developed, and while it has not been long enough to determine what impact it has had or how the new residents will contribute to enlivening downtown, experience in other jurisdictions in the region has shown how developing a critical mass of new residents can have an exponentially positive impact on street life, particularly as retailers follow. Moreover, due to the appealing and similarly affordable single-family residential neighborhoods surrounding the Wheaton CBD, increasing the stock of multi-family housing opportunities within the CBD provides an opportunity for younger professionals to move in to an apartment

initially and then perhaps move in to a single-family home in Wheaton as they grow older; similarly, it also provides an opportunity for older residents to age-in-place and eventually move in to a residential unit that requires less maintenance than a single-family home, should they wish to do so.

Retail uses that cater to young professional residents and families. Due to Wheaton's relative affordability, the Wheaton CBD provides a rather unique opportunity within the region for younger professionals and families seeking affordable living in a location that is well-served by transit, with many urban amenities; as such, emphasis should be placed on attracting retail that caters to them, a component which seems to be missing now.

One or two strategically-located value anchors and national mid-level restaurants. The panel recognizes the value of the independent, smaller-scale retailers that currently exist in Wheaton, but also recommends marketing outreach to get one or two national chains, particularly in the restaurant category. As one panelist noted, even though many people may not like chains, rightly or wrongly they do add "familiarity" to a place for many consumers, while also providing a credit tenant to a shopping center. As long as balance is maintained—which should be easier given the number of independent restaurants already in existence—the two types of restaurants can work in a complementary fashion to help create a critical mass of destination choices and a sense of place. The example of Clarendon was cited by the panel, where the arrival of The Cheesecake Factory helped to build and attract other retail. The panel recognizes that a Ruby Tuesday exists in the mall, but having such a restaurant on the street would provide far greater spinoff benefits.

Live music venue, and civic branding organized around food, music, entertainment and culture. It is important to note that the panel is not recommending something on the scale of Live Nation, like the one that will exist in Silver Spring, or Strathmore, but rather smaller, incubator spaces that can provide new destinations, add liveliness to the area and help reinforce Wheaton's identity as a center for food, music, entertainment and culture. Such spaces could draw upon key strengths that already exist with Chuck Levin's Washington Music Center and the history that surrounds it, and with Wheaton's diversity. While Silver Spring has established itself as a film center, and Bethesda has a number of performing arts spaces, Wheaton has an opportunity to become a music center, which could also result in economic development opportunities in music production and other supportive functions.

International grocer. The panel also pointed to the benefits that accrue from international grocers, who often go in to older stores and renovate them, and to the suitability of the Wheaton CBD for such a use. During the panel feedback session, members of the community mentioned that such grocers exist within Wheaton, so it may be that these stores merely need to be more prominently featured.

Limited potential for office: small- to medium-scale professional only. As discussed previously, the panel does see a limited potential for small- to medium-scale,

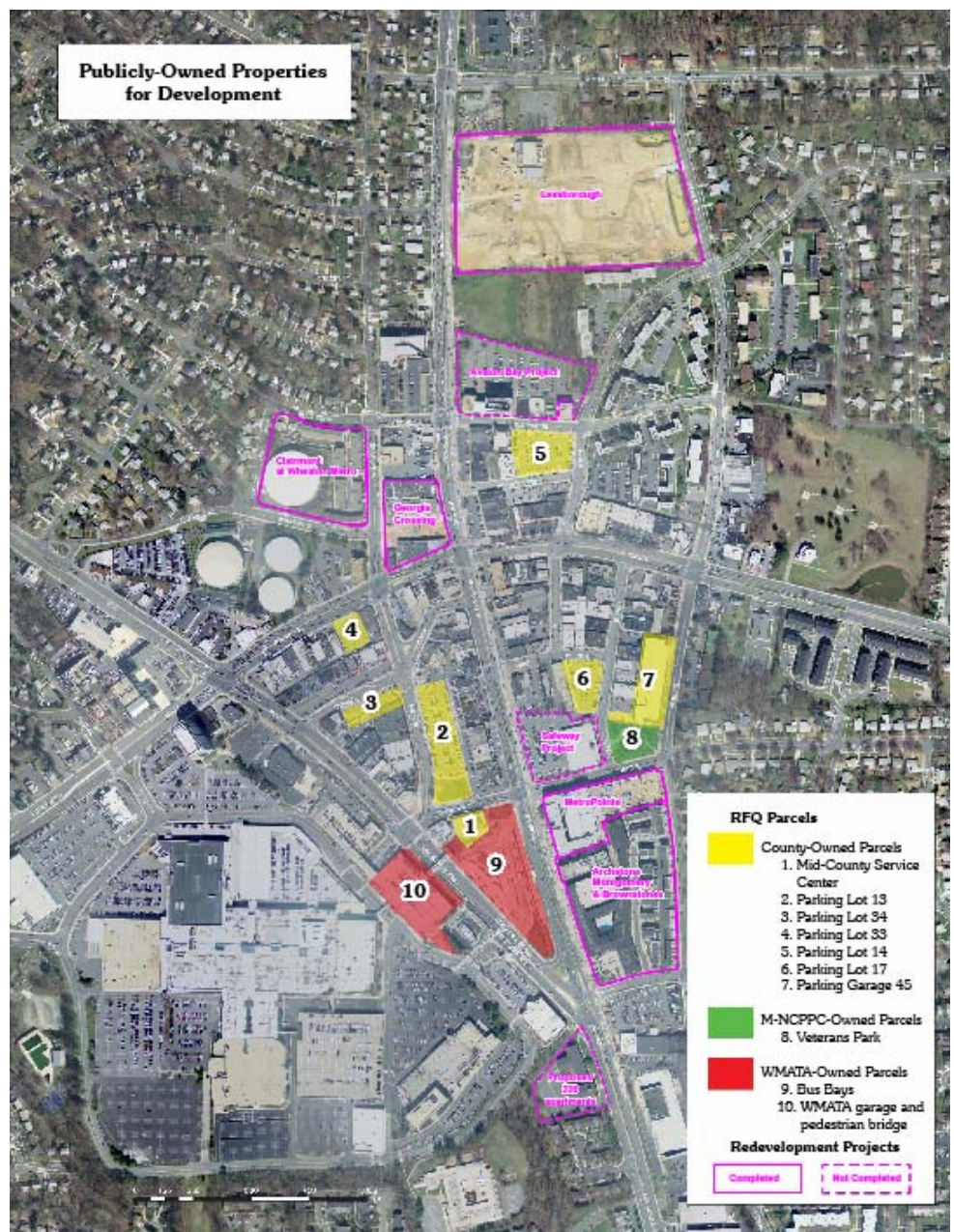
professional office. Medical office, specifically, could have the potential for some success in the area, given potential connections to Holy Cross Hospital. While the panel recognizes the widespread sentiment in the community for more large-scale office space, they do not see a demand for such, and they note that the use of new residential projects to help create a sense of place should not be dismissed.

# Development Strategies

Based on the above findings regarding Market Potential, the panel sought to summarize their recommendations for development strategies and elements in one sentence: “Development strategies for the Wheaton CBD should be residentially-driven, filling in the gaps in retail and capitalizing on a music/cultural component, which must be supported by a new civic armature.”

## Creating Districts

In fleshing out this statement, the panel first noted that the Wheaton CBD is actually a rather large area, and due to the importance of creating a critical mass for each of the above-cited elements, a recommended approach would be creating districts where redevelopment efforts could be concentrated. These efforts could move in phases, coinciding with the market viability for each type of product (and with each laying the groundwork for the next, as is the case with additional residential creating a more inviting environment for new retail) and could eventually even include the mall. These districts would also fit nicely within the context of the publicly-owned sites that will be made available by the County and WMATA via an RFQ. To the right is the map of the RFQ parcels, and following is the panel’s map of proposed districts.







*Illustration 1: Districting Strategy for redevelopment, also showing potential new “green connections”*

With this districting strategy, Parking Lot 13 (RFQ Parcel #2) could become more of a music and civic district, or Town Center, drawing upon the existing retail surrounding the parking lot (including the Washington Music Center to the west) and the currently existing open space, which needs to be improved and expanded in order to allow for larger gatherings and events. To the east could be the entertainment and residential district, building upon plans that already exist for the Safeway redevelopment, with residential above.

To the north, the potential exists for an additional strong residential district, including the planned Avalon Bay project on the former BB&T Bank building site, and on the west, in the very long-term, would be the potential for a mixed-use commerce district on the site currently occupied by the mall.

The site currently occupied by the WMATA bus bays (RFQ Parcel #9) would serve as the intermodal district. As indicated in the illustration above by the purple asterisks, each district should also have a strong visual node incorporated within itself, to allow for immediate identification.

The panel did hear and consider suggestions from some stakeholders that the bus bays be relocated to the site to the north (RFQ Parcel #2) in order to better facilitate development of Parcel #9. Without being fully briefed on this idea, the panel cannot fully evaluate the feasibility or merits of such a proposal. However, the panel does strongly feel that the area to the north of the Mid-County Regional Services Center with its existing park and retail is actually one of the most interesting and successful parts of the Wheaton CBD, with the best sense of place, and should therefore be treated with care. This does not mean that all the existing buildings or uses must stay, but rather that the space already exists, and with some work could be a great place without having to wait for redevelopment. The panel is not convinced that putting the bus bays under Lot 13 has any real positive impact on the viability of the town square businesses, nor would it make it easier for those buildings to be replaced by something “nicer” or “better.” The best way to revitalize the town square businesses is to increase the residential density around them and bring in a broader mix of ages and incomes. Nor, without further information, is the panel certain that the cost of tunneling and placing bus bays under Parking Lot 13 is likely to be less expensive than construction over the existing bus bay location. Of course, if this is indeed the proposal that is strongly preferred by the community, and the county and/or state is willing to absorb this cost as a result, such a proposal could be implemented, but given prevailing economic conditions such a large public investment would appear to be unlikely.

### **Music and Entertainment as Overarching Theme**

The panel's focus on music and entertainment, as evidenced by the two proposed districts and by other references throughout the report, stems from the fact that the panel heard from stakeholders—and noted on their own—that currently there are many different communities in Wheaton, but they, and their businesses, seem to be operating separately from one another. In the panel's opinion, if there is anything that is cross-cultural, it is music. Creating such districts would further a civic branding effort focused on food, music, culture, and entertainment, which could in turn provide an organizing point for the community, and would help create a more cohesive Wheaton identity for both residents and those outside the community, who might thereby be prompted to learn more by visiting. Because only so many people will come from outside the community to visit such venues, though, the creation of the residential districts, and the addition of more people to the Wheaton CBD, is just as essential.

### **Phasing of Districts in Tandem with the Market**

Drilling down further in to each district, the panel suggested a phased approach, building upon strengths that currently exist and projects that have already been proposed. Such an approach can help build up the Wheaton CBD market, such that

when the time is ripe to take on the largest and most challenging projects, the incentive will be there for developers to do a first-class job, and the infrastructure will also be ready to accommodate and complement them.

Again and again, the panel heard the question asked, “What is the catalyst project?” Their response is that it is not going to be office that comes first, and that indeed it may never come, other than perhaps a 50,000- 100,000 foot scale small office project. Nor will it be retail, as there is already a lot of retail existing in the area. In the panel’s view, the nearest term opportunity is to bring more people to the CBD, something that is already happening with MetroPointe, Archstone, and the EYA and Centex townhomes. By continuing to promote such projects, over time more people will be on the ground, and retail will respond. To that end, the panel recommends the following approach:

### 1) Near term

a) Do whatever is possible to encourage **the Avalon Bay and Safeway projects** to move forward. On the eastern side of Georgia, there are several blocks that allow for near-term residential projects that can build on the success of MetroPointe. As the Safeway project is one that is in for approval right now, it is probably the nearest-term, moreover, it makes sense, as it adds density near the Metro, where it should be. Given the rents currently achieved at MetroPointe and Archstone, the panel does have some questions about whether such a high-rise project is viable without incentives, particularly given the presumed costs for construction of parking for the project. The panel recommends that the County do whatever it can to work with developer and make the project happen, including the potential provision of subsidies or incentives.

b) The other best opportunities for early-action multi-family projects are presented by **RFQ Parcels 6, 7, and 8**. As will be elaborated on in the Implementation section of the report, the panel advises the county to issue an individual RFQ for a combination of blocks 6, 7, & 8 (Price Square area) with the size of these combined parcels allowing for a good-sized, creative residential project. Block 7 already has parking that is underutilized; this would solve the problem of a residential developer coming in and paying for parking, as they could instead tether their project to the garage. The panel recommends further study regarding whether the current park should be moved so that the project can be more closely tied to the garage; given the current underutilization of the park, doing so would probably make the most sense, though, as the park could then be relocated within the combined parcel, and would then be well-activated by the new residential projects.

c) **RFQ Parcel 2 (Parking Lot 13)** offers the potential for both an enlarged and enhanced park and an additional 1-story retail building, or a 2-3 story building with ground-floor retail and residential or small office on top. In either scenario, the building would be located in the middle of the parcel and with angled parking, leaving **RFQ Parcel 3** as additional parking to serve it and the currently-existing retail surrounding the lot. Redevelopment of this parcel in such a manner would greatly complement the retail that already exists on each side of the parking lot, creating the type of two-sided,



walkable retail street environment that retailers and consumers prefer. The panel does caution, however, that the 2-3 story building scenario, while adding additional life to the area, could also lead to a parking challenge.

## **2) Mid term**

Most actions that need to be taken in the mid-term do not concern development strategies as much as they do infrastructure and street grid improvements, and as such are treated more thoroughly in the following Planning & Design section of the report. However, the eventual redevelopment of the **Ourisman site** on Viers Mill Road would appear to offer an excellent opportunity to provide better linkages between the mall and the Metro station and retail across the street. As the site is not a public-owned parcel, it falls outside the scope of this TAP, but it is nonetheless an important opportunity site, meriting further study.

And, although the panel did not spend as much time on this parcel, **RFQ Parcel 5** (Parking Lot 14) would appear to offer a mid-term opportunity for mid-rise residential and townhome development, with its prospects for redevelopment made stronger once the aforementioned infrastructure improvements are in place. Such a use would also be appropriate, as it would allow for density to scale down as you move farther away from the Metro station. The end result of all these projects would be both a great deal more people downtown, and also a nice mix, with more families up north, and more single professionals and other multi-family residents down closer to the Metro station.

## **3) Longer term**

The panel heard many stakeholders describe the **WMATA bus bay and garage parcels and the Mid-County Regional Service Center parcels (RFQ Parcels 9, 10, and 1)** as the marquee sites, and the most valuable and impactful for redevelopment. And indeed, the Panel agrees with this assessment, which is precisely why the panel does not think it makes sense to go out with those parcels now. As they are the most valuable sites, with the potential for the greatest density, the panel advises holding out until other critical mass and improvements are made, including sector plan completion and transportation and street grid improvements, in order to get the highest quality result possible.

Also in the long term, and outside of the RFQ process, the panel noted that the part of the mall that is vacant and has a great deal of surface parking could provide an opportunity to create an urban village, with residential or mixed use project and with a rational street grid that connects to downtown. The panel therefore recommends working with Westfield on site plan, access and density enhancements, particularly on the southern half of site, in preparation for potential redevelopment when the time is appropriate.

## Planning & Design

As discussed above in the Development Strategies section of the report, in the near- to mid-term a number of design and infrastructure improvements also need to be made by the public sector, in order to spur and complement private redevelopment activity and allow for better connectivity in the Wheaton CBD and the community as a whole. They are as follows:

Increasing green connections. As sketched out in Illustration 1 previously, the green framework of the community should be improved through the addition of bike lanes and other features that better connect the CBD to its surroundings, including enhanced connections to the Wheaton Regional Park. Amherst Avenue appeared to offer promise for such a route. The panel was told that only 1% of Metrorail riders arrive at the Wheaton station via bike; when taken with the fact that there are less than 5,000 people per day boarding at the Wheaton station, providing better opportunities for people to access the station via bike would seem to provide a good opportunity to increase overall ridership at the station.

Allow for on-street parking and potential dedicated bus lanes. As seen in illustration #2 to the right, the panel recommends allowing for off-peak, on-street parking on Viers Mill Road, Georgia Avenue, and University Boulevard, as well as continuous on-street parking on other local streets, in order to tame traffic and provide additional parking opportunities for the retail facing the streets. This issue will need to be closely coordinated with the State Highway Administration, who maintains control of each of these roads.

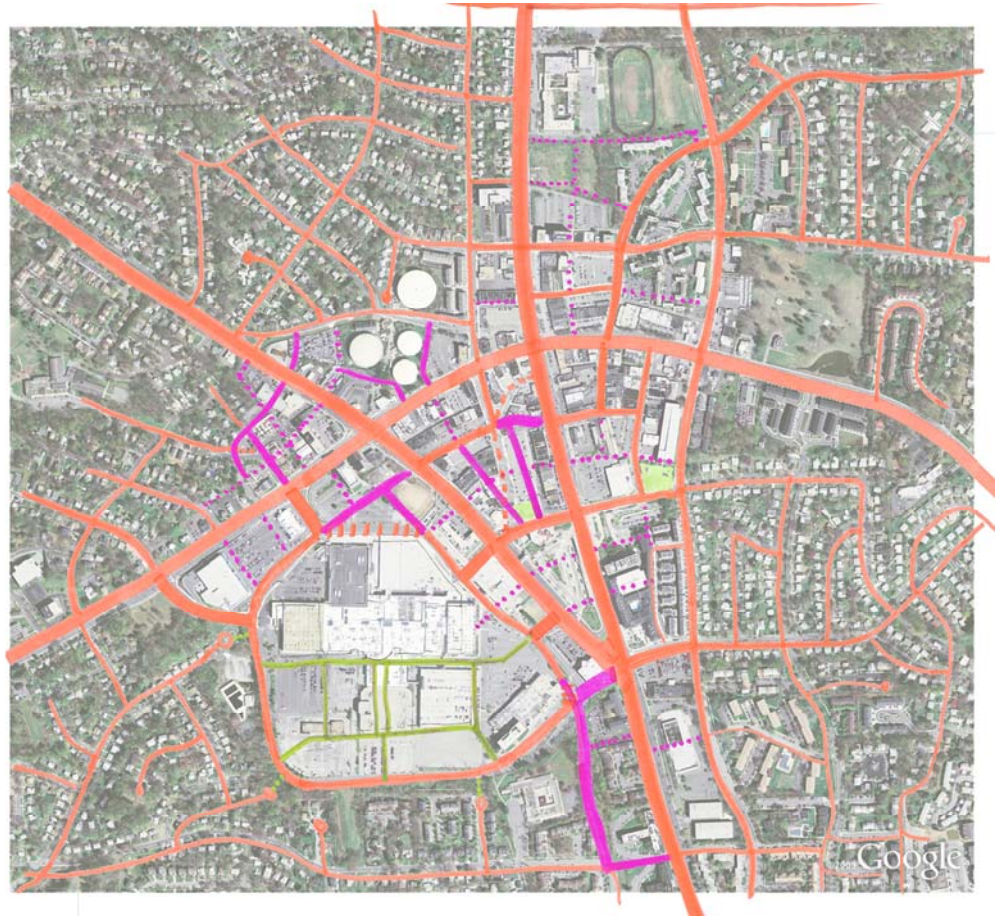


*Illustration 2: On street parking and off-peak, on street parking potential*

Additionally, considering the importance of Wheaton Metro Station as a transfer center, and the fact that Viers Mill Road and Georgia Avenue have both been identified by County as opportunities for expanded bus service, the panel urges consideration of dedicated lanes for buses or BRT.

### Create additional street and pedestrian connections.

As seen in illustration #3 to the right, adding several new roads and pedestrian connections can create an improved grid network, allowing for both smaller roads and smaller, more walkable blocks with the creation of a more diffuse network, while also taking part of the load off major arterials such as Georgia Avenue and Viers Mill Road. The illustration to the right depicts some potential connections, but is in no way definitive;



*Illustration 3: Creating additional street and pedestrian connections*

rather, the panel merely provides this illustration as one potential example, and urges Wheaton residents to seek out such additional connections via the Sector Planning Process. Nor do all of the proposed new streets need to be dedicated to automobiles, as the photo below of a pedestrian street in Miami shows.





Additionally, such new streets can feature roundabouts and other design features that slow traffic, as demonstrated in the photo to the right.



Build to the street edge.

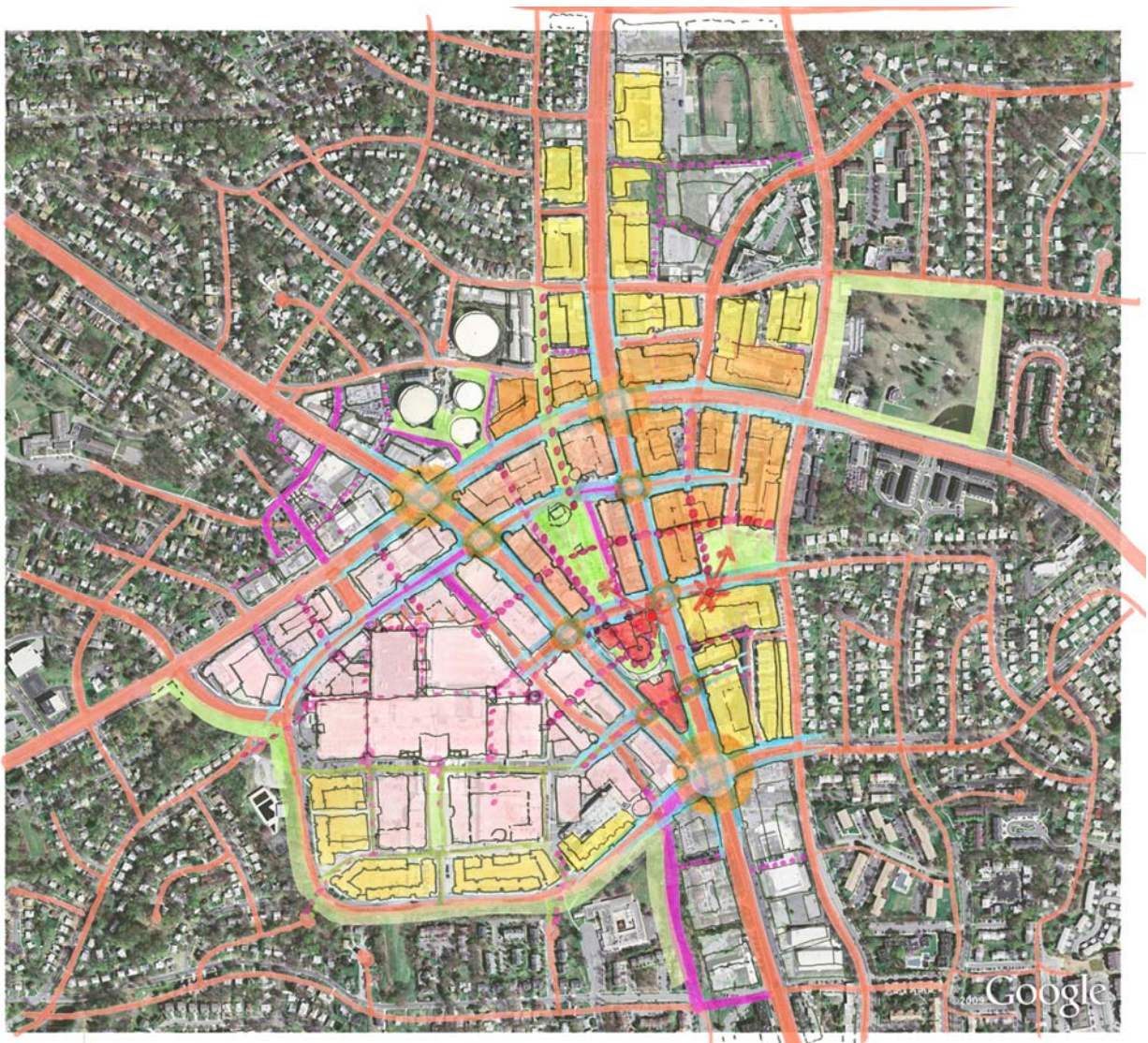
The panel also strongly recommends that future development be built to the street edge, with parking provided on street, as noted above, or via garages, in order to better frame the streets and create a more walkable and transit-friendly streetscape.



*Illustration 4: Building to the street edges*



Combining all of the elements of the previous illustrations into one, illustration #5 below provides an idea of where and what type of redevelopment could occur based on the districts discussed earlier in the report. Much of this development would be residential dominant, but since the county is considering a new mixed-use CR zone, there is a possibility that a mix of uses would be permitted under certain circumstances. The illustration below also depicts how the new linkages outlined in Illustration 3 create block sizes suited to the type of development appropriate for each site. For example, a Class A office building is 120 feet wide by 240-270 feet long; residential buildings are 65-70 feet wide by 250-400 feet long; and parking garages are on modules of 60 feet, so they may be a minimum of 120 feet wide. Thus, if you take all the streets and look at the development pattern that can go in the corridors, while also including sufficient green space, you start to get a strategy that enables you to think the way the private development community thinks; this hopefully provides a useful starting point for the community as they undertake the Sector Planning Process and begin providing their input as to what they would like to see happen.



*Illustration 5: Potential Development Framework*

# Implementation

## RFQ Strategy

As depicted in Illustration 1, a number of County and WMATA-owned sites are being made available for redevelopment through an RFQ process. In thinking through the strategy for how these sites could best be utilized, the panel decided that because there are such different levels of market opportunity and potential for each of the sites, and because there may be very different types of developers interested in them, the best approach is to issue multiple modified RFQs aligned with the proposed subdistricts and tied to the sector plan. While these RFQs should not be proscriptive to the development community, they should provide guidance, indicating that the community views a parcel or group of parcels as a potential residential district, town center, or other development type. Utilizing such a process also signals that the community has priorities, which would not be the case if simply one all-encompassing RFQ were sent out.

The highest value sites are in the WMATA bus bay area (RFQ Parcels 9, 10, and 1), which are also the most challenging ones to develop, and the panel strongly feels that putting an RFQ for development proposals for these sites out now will not result in getting the best value or the highest and best use for them; holding them back and working through transportation and connectivity issues first is the better strategy.

The overall strategy can be summarized as follows, and is also depicted in Illustration 5, below :

- Issue multiple modified RFQs that recognize identified sub-districts that are tied to the sector plan.
- Phase RFQs according to market conditions, supporting infrastructure improvements, strengthening of Wheaton's brand in regional marketplace, and absorption potential
  - Separate RFQs for following parcels:
    - "Residential District": Parcels 6, 7, and 8 (near term)
    - "Town Center": Parcel 2, with Parcel 3 maintained as parking in supporting role (near term)
    - "Townhouse Enclave": Parcel 5 (mid term)
    - "High-Density Signature Site": Parcels 1, 9, and 10 (long term)
- Include a clearly stated one-page summary of all federal, state, and local development incentives available for use in developments in this area





*Illustration 6: Recommended RFQ Strategy*

## **An Integrated Approach to Community Building and Business Development**

The remaining piece of the puzzle for the Wheaton CBD is organization, telling the Wheaton story, and promoting it. These functions are particularly important in a down economy, when all communities are positioning themselves for the next wave of development; those which use this time wisely and emerge prepared will have a head start on their competition. It was not completely clear to the panel what distinct functions each organization operating in and on behalf of the Wheaton CBD are responsible for, nor how they align their efforts for maximum effect. The panel recommends designating a single entity to serve as lead for all management and economic development initiatives in the area, including Clean and Safe services, marketing/pr/branding, special events programming and management of the Town Center and park, business

attraction and retention, and advocacy. As political figures change at other levels of government, this organization would remain as a point of consistency.

### **Downtown Belongs to Everybody**

The panel believes that Wheaton's greatest strengths are its cultural diversity and its musical legacy, and that these strengths have not been capitalized on to their full extent. In terms of the cultural diversity especially, this seems to hold true both within the community itself, where groups appear to operate independently from each other, as well as in the promotion of the community to the rest of the region, where messages about this diversity do not appear to be prominently featured. Downtown Wheaton offers the opportunity to accomplish both, by focusing on the message: "Downtown is common ground for everybody; it belongs to everybody."

To that end, the panel recommends dramatically increasing programming activities on existing and proposed public spaces, including farmers' markets, music festivals, food festivals, concerts, arts and crafts shows, and holiday festival, using open-space programming to celebrate the ethnic diversity of Wheaton. Parking Lot 13 (RFQ Parcel 2), with an improved and larger green space incorporated into it, would provide the ideal setting for such activities, so everyone in the community knows there is always something happening there.

### **Forging Connections Through the Sector Planning Process**

The panel believes that the Sector Planning Process currently taking place in Wheaton provides the ideal vehicle for the members of the community to collaboratively address the issues raised above, and to begin forging connections with each other. The panel hopes that this report serves as a useful starting point for such discussions, and provides a market-based, long-term view of what could be possible.



# Appendix

Illustration 1: Districting Strategy for redevelopment, also showing potential new “green connections”

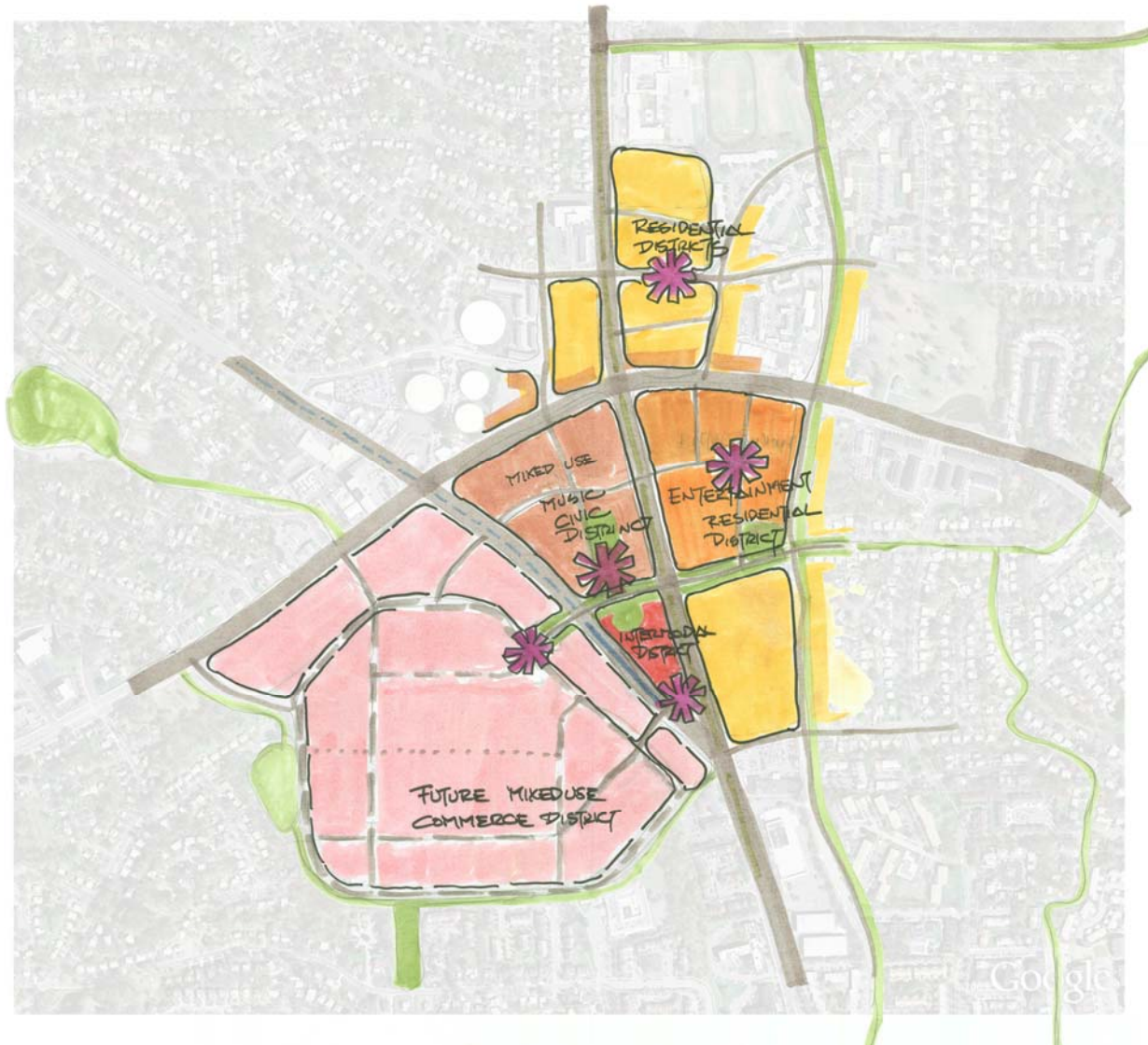


Illustration 2: On street parking and off-peak, on street parking potential

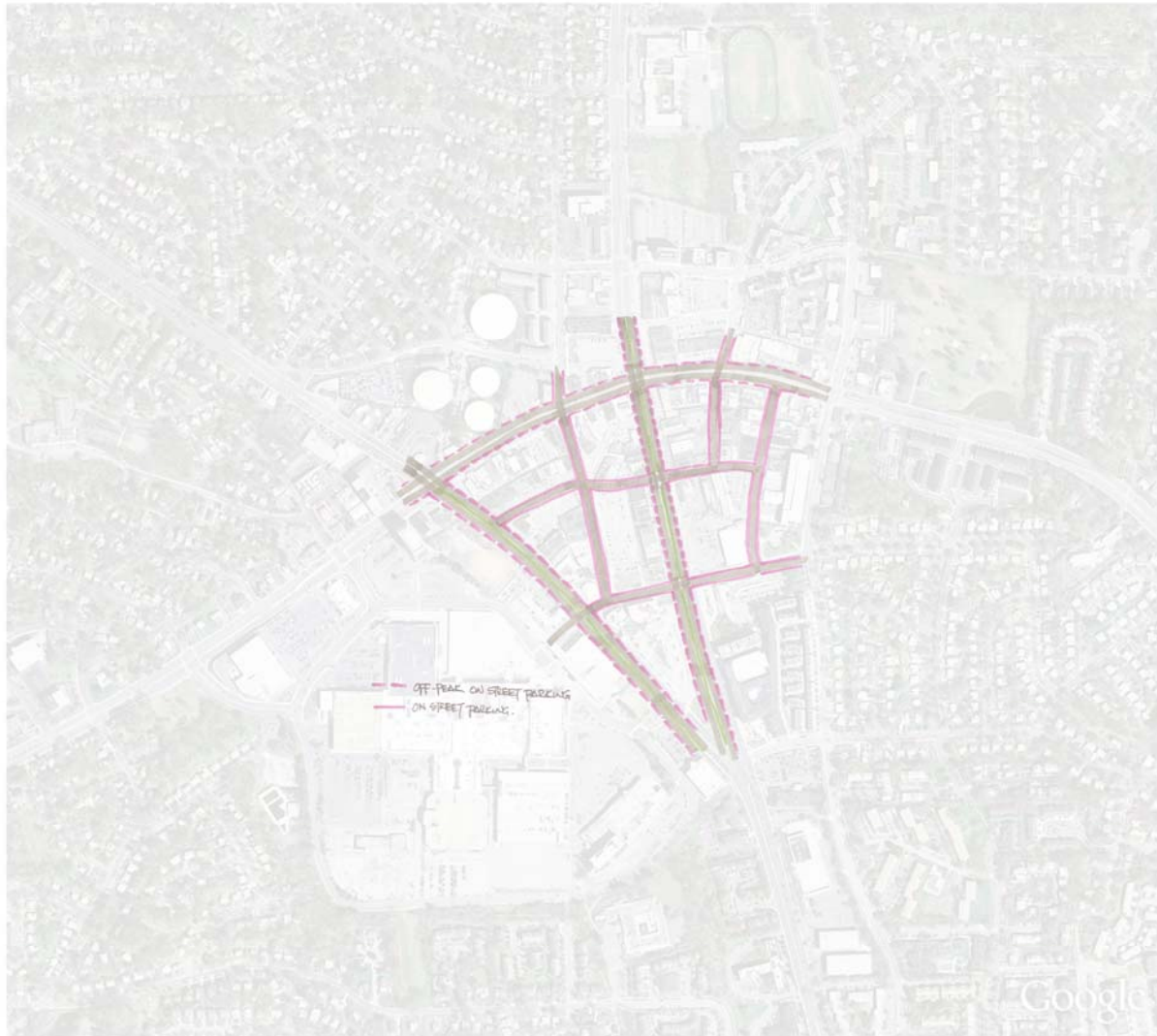




Illustration 3: Creating additional street and pedestrian connections

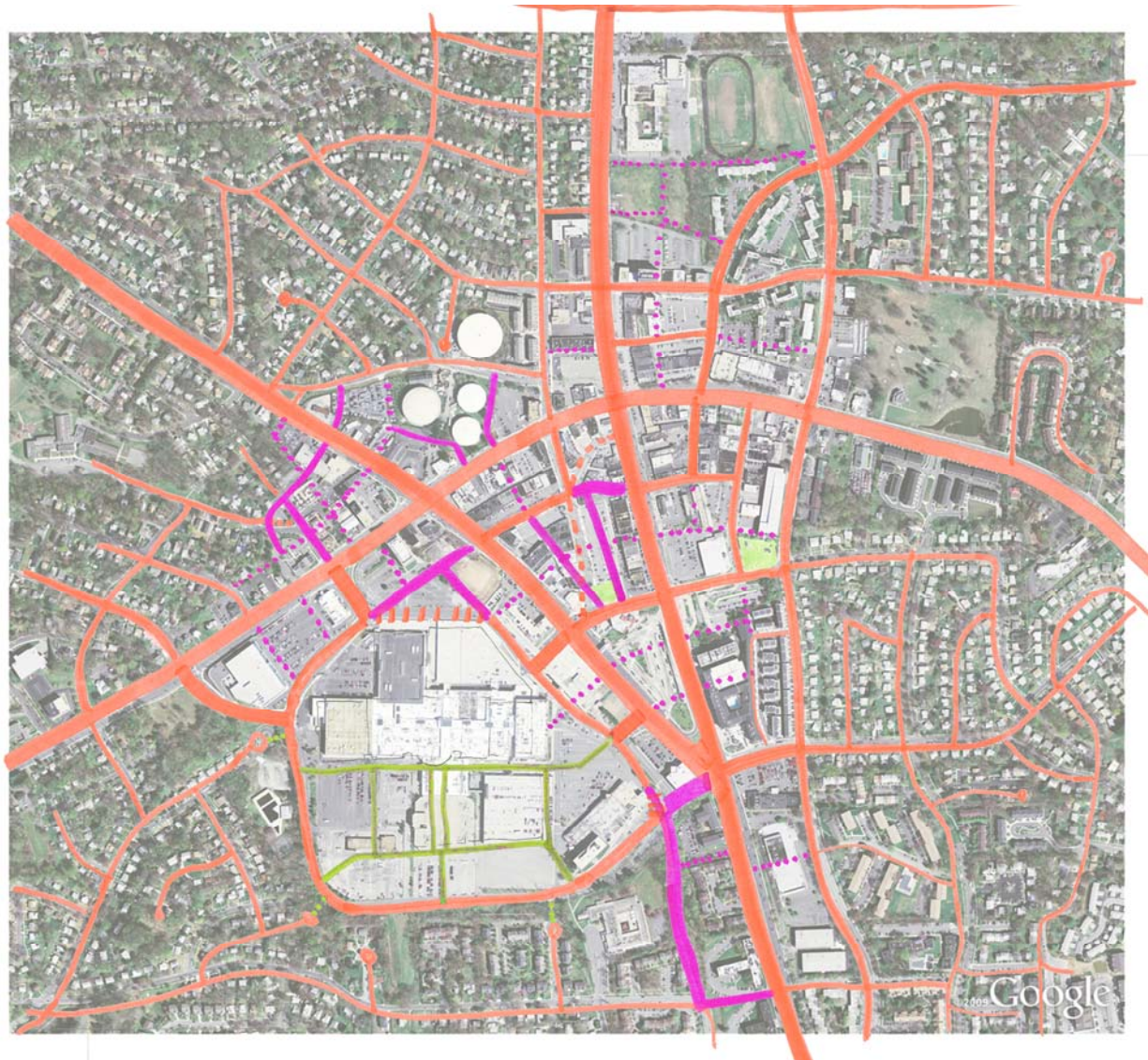


Illustration 4: Building to the street edges





Illustration 5: Potential Development Framework

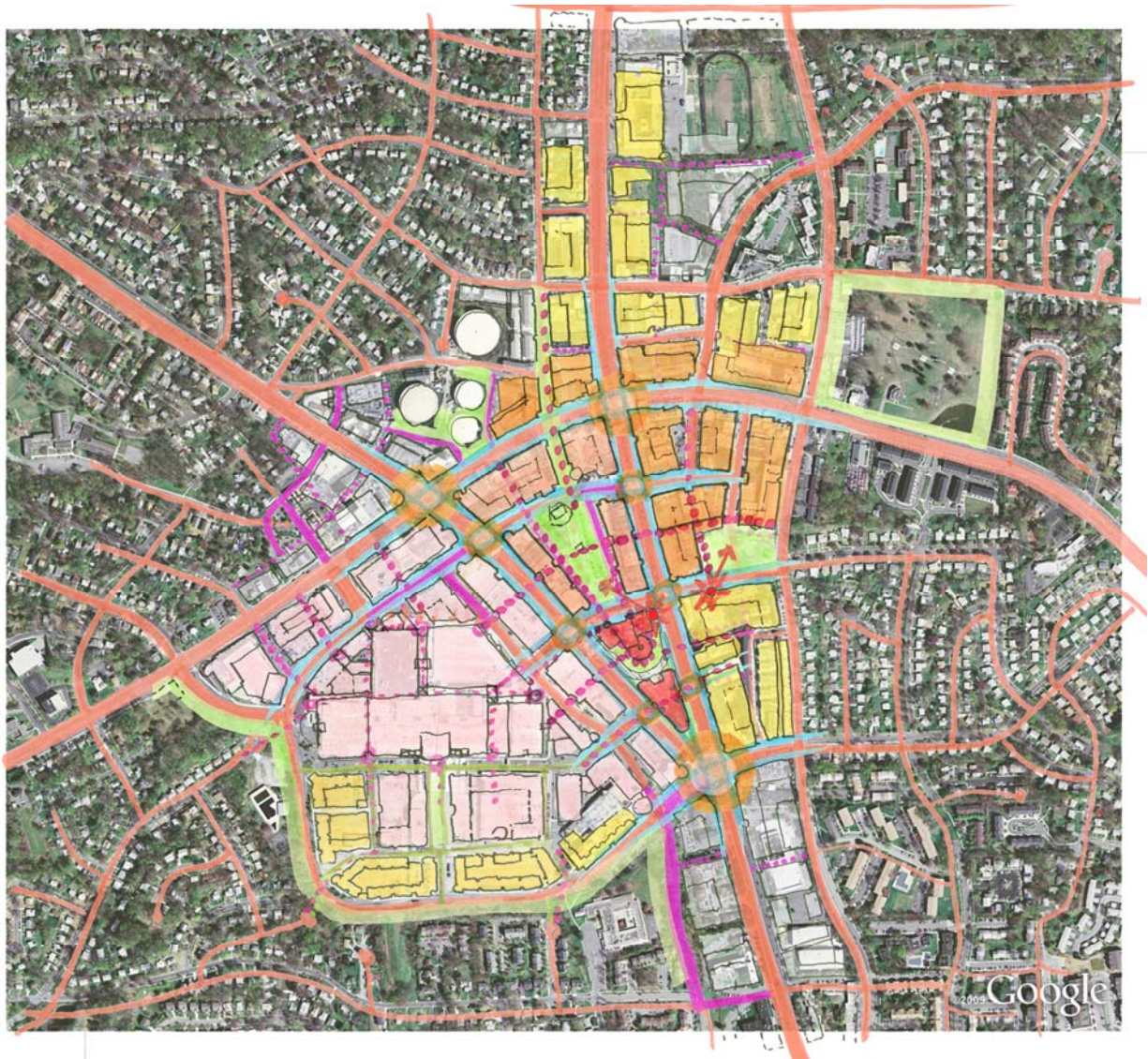
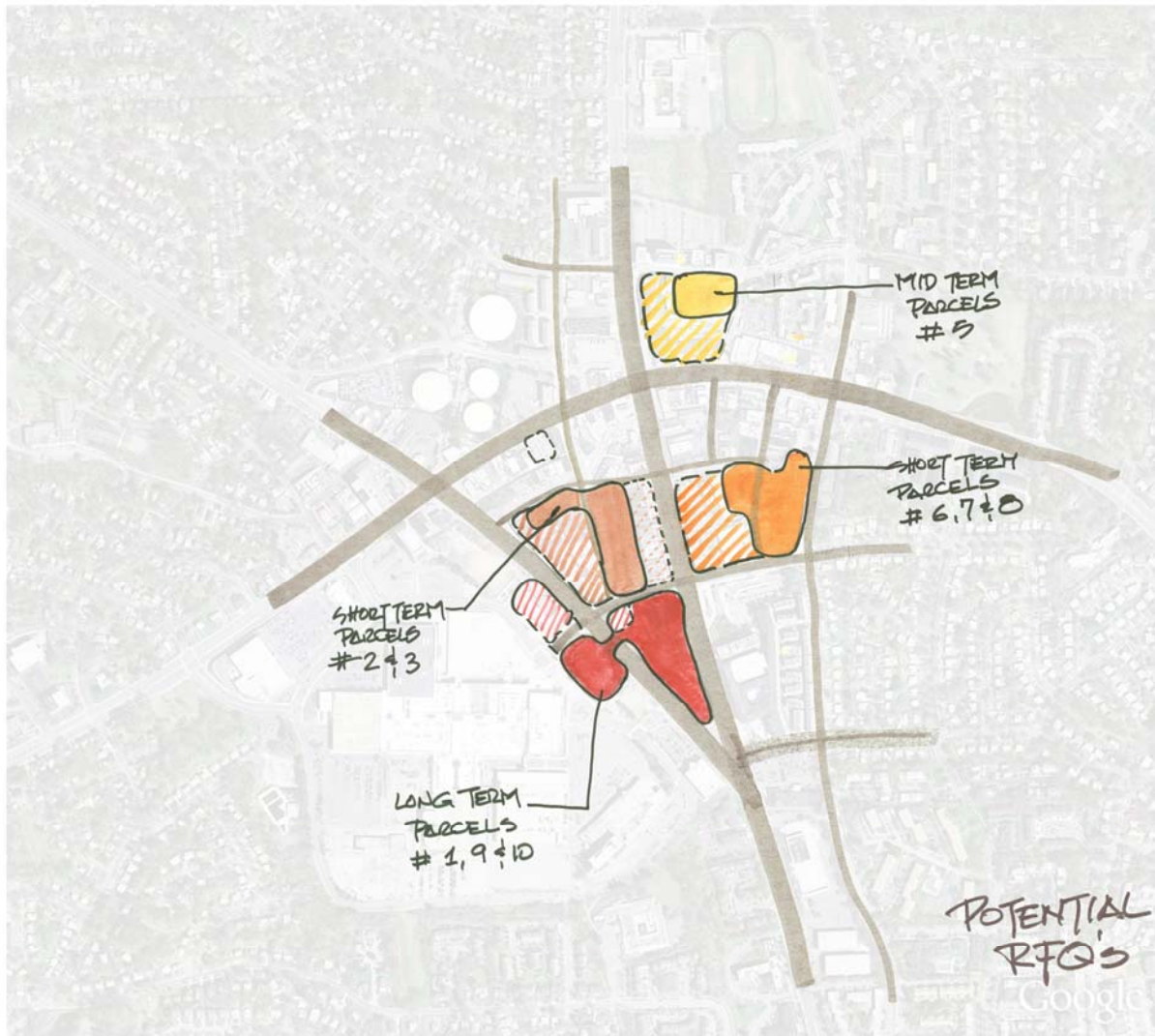


Illustration 6: Recommended RFQ Strategy



## About the Panel

### **David Kitchens (Panel Chair)** **Cooper Carry** **Alexandria, VA**

David Kitchens, AIA serves as Principal-in-Charge of Cooper Carry's Alexandria, Virginia office. In 25 years of service with Cooper Carry, David has led Transit Oriented Mixed-Use design efforts on a variety of award-winning projects including Mizner Park in Boca Raton, Florida. This mixed-use development has been recognized by a variety of organizations including the AIA, which bestowed upon it the Excellence of Design Award. Kitchen's work includes Bethesda Row in Bethesda, Maryland, which was awarded the Best Block in America 2002 by The Congress For The Urbanism, the Excellence Award from the Urban Land Institute and the Maryland/DC NAIOP Award of Excellence for Best Smart Growth Master Plan.

David is a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the National Trust for Historic Preservation and serves on the annual Design Awards committee for the Maryland/DC NAIOP. He participates on AIA-sponsored Urban Design Assistance Teams, making recommendations to cities for downtown redevelopment. David holds Bachelors and Masters degrees in Architecture from the Georgia Institute of Technology. He is NCARB certified and is registered in over 25 states and the District of Columbia.

### **Robert E. Brosnan** **Arlington County** **Arlington, VA**

Mr. Brosnan has been the Planning Director for Arlington County since 1988 and has worked in Arlington since 1977. In his capacity as the Planning Director he is responsible for overseeing the Development Review Process, Comprehensive Planning, and Zoning Administration. Much of his career with Arlington has been focused on planning for two transit corridors that bisect the County and he has been closely involved in planning for and developing land use and zoning tools to encourage development as well as negotiating development proposals. This work was recently recognized when Arlington was awarded the first National Award for Smart Growth Achievement by EPA and a 2005 Sustainable Community Award from the National Association of Counties. The Planning Division has also recently completed working with the community to develop a form based code for the Columbia Pike Corridor to encourage the revitalization and works closely with the Housing Division to implement affordable housing policies and to encourage the construction of new affordable housing. During his time in Arlington, the county has seen the development of 20,280,399 sq. ft. of office/retail and 20,625 residential units in the two transit corridors

Mr. Brosnan received a Master's of City and Regional Planning from Catholic University and a BA in Business Administration; Management from Georgetown University.



**Grant Ehat**  
**JBG Rosenfeld**  
**Chevy Chase, MD**

Mr. Ehat co-directs the acquisition, business development and anchor leasing activities at JBGR. With more than 20 years of experience in the commercial real estate industry, he is actively involved in the entitlement, design, and development processes for the company's pipeline. Prior to joining JBGR in 1993, Mr. Ehat held positions with Glenn & Company and Commercial Property Associates. He holds a B.B.A. from James Madison University, is a licensed real estate broker in Virginia, Maryland, D.C., and West Virginia, and is an active member of ICSC and ULI. Additionally, Mr. Ehat sits on the advisory board for Washington First Bank.

**Marisa G. Flowers**  
**Green Door Advisors, LLC (GDA)**  
**Washington, DC**

Ms. Flowers combines real estate development experience in the private, public and non-profit sectors to provide a unique perspective to analyzing and managing the development process in complicated marketplaces. Green Door Advisors, LLC (GDA) is an urban focused full service real estate advisory firm founded in 2006. GDA was founded specifically to provide comprehensive advisory services to public sector and nonprofit clients, institutions, developers and others working in the increasingly complex urban and emerging markets. GDA leverages a deep level of knowledge and experience in public/private development in the Metropolitan D.C. and Southern California regions to provide the highest level of analytically based advisory services to its clients.

Ms. Flowers has led GDA engagements including; market analysis for urban residential developments (affordable, senior and market rate) and retail developments, financial and redevelopment implementation strategy for the redevelopment of public assets, inventory and development strategy for institutions, development management services for faith based community development corporations and tax increment financing for new retail and mixed-use projects, among many engagements.

Most recently, as the Director of Real Estate Transactions with the National Capital Revitalization Corporation (NCRC) in Washington, D.C., Ms. Flowers oversaw a team of Development Managers and directed over \$300M of real estate projects for the Corporation. Previously, Ms. Flowers was a Senior Consultant with Robert Charles Lesser and Company (RCLCO) and was engaged on over 40 real estate advisory projects throughout the United States, Mexico and the Caribbean and work for the Local Initiative Support Corporation. Ms. Flowers graduated Summa cum Laude from UC Berkeley with a Bachelor's degree in American Studies and received a Masters in City Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

**Calvin Gladney**  
**Mosaic Urban Partners**  
**Washington, DC**

Calvin Gladney, LEED® AP, is a public-private partnership strategist, real estate developer, and trusted advisor to organizations seeking to sustainably transform urban communities.



Mr. Gladney is Managing Partner of Mosaic Urban Partners, LLC, a real estate development and advisory services firm based in Washington, D.C. Mosaic has a *passion* for public-private partnerships and its core purpose is to transform urban communities. Prior to founding Mosaic, Mr. Gladney served as Vice President of the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation (AWC), a District of Columbia quasi-public real estate corporation where he assisted the CEO with the management of the Corporation and was the project manager for a \$1B mixed-use redevelopment of 67-acres of District-controlled land.

Prior to his tenure at AWC, Mr. Gladney was General Counsel and Transactions Manager at BRIDGE Housing Corporation, a private developer in San Francisco, CA. At BRIDGE Mr. Gladney was the lead business person in the investment of \$60M of CalPERS equity in multiple real estate development deals. He also provided strategic advice on the development or management of more than 2700 apartment units throughout California.

Prior to his tenure at BRIDGE, Mr. Gladney was the first Senior Development Director and Counsel at the National Capital Revitalization Corporation (NCRC), a quasi-public District of Columbia real estate corporation. At NCRC Mr. Gladney managed the acquisition of NCRC's \$1B government real estate portfolio and helped select private developers for over \$250M of residential and retail development projects. Prior to his tenure at NCRC, Mr. Gladney was a transactional real estate attorney at Latham & Watkins in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Gladney graduated *cum laude* from Harvard Law School, received his B.S. from Cornell University and is a LEED Accredited Professional. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Urban Land Institute's Washington, D.C. District Council, the Sustainable Business Network of Washington, D.C. and the D.C. Building Industry Association.

**Elisa L. Hill**  
**Elisa Hill & Associates**  
**Upper Marlboro, MD**

Elisa Hill is President of Elisa Hill & Associates, a consulting firm specializing in transit oriented development. She currently advises local government on transit oriented development issues. From 1990-2007 Ms. Hill was a Senior Development Specialist and Acting Manager in the Joint Development Program of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). During her tenure, Ms. Hill was instrumental in developing policies and guidelines that promoted the program's evolution into one of the most successful in the country. She personally managed several of WMATA's largest joint development projects. Her duties included participating in local planning and zoning processes; developing strategies to position properties in WMATA's joint development inventory to maximize economic benefits; evaluating development proposals; and negotiating development agreements.

Before joining WMATA, Ms. Hill was a principal in a residential condominium development firm and deputy director of a federally funded community development corporation, both in Boston, Massachusetts. She is a graduate of Brandeis University, Columbia University and Boston College Law School. She has also completed the Minority Developers' Executive Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

**Tennille Smith Parker**  
**City of Falls Church, VA**  
**Falls Church, VA**

Ms. Parker has served as a program analyst and housing specialist for the City of Falls Church since March 2003. In her current capacity as a program analyst, she is responsible for the management of the City's housing and social services contracts; management of the City's Community Services Fund grants; and coordination of the housing/social services component of the City's Continuity of Operations Plan. Previously, Ms. Parker was responsible for the development and implementation of affordable housing products and programs; negotiating the inclusion of affordable housing in mixed-use projects; administering the City's Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) programs; and conducting outreach activities with affordable housing organizations and developers.

Prior to joining the City, Ms. Parker began her career in housing and community development at U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1998 through an appointment under the Presidential Management Fellows Program. While at HUD, she worked as a community planning and development specialist specifically working with the CDBG program, and was responsible for CDBG regulatory and technical assistance for HUD's Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, and Caribbean offices.

Originally from Pittsburgh, Ms. Parker moved to northern Virginia to attend George Mason University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Government and Politics. Ms. Parker also holds a Master of Public Administration degree from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. She is on the board of the George Mason University Alumni Association and an active member of the Urban Land Institute Washington District Council.

**Trini Rodriguez**  
**ParkerRodriguez, Inc.**  
**Alexandria, Virginia**

Ms. Trini Rodriguez is a registered landscape architect and land planner, with degrees in architecture, landscape architecture and urban design from the University of Venezuela and University of Pennsylvania. She is principal of ParkerRodriguez, a landscape architecture and land planning firm of over 20 professionals. Ms. Rodriguez has nearly twenty years of experience managing the planning and design of large-scale, mixed-use projects throughout the United States and abroad. Her interdisciplinary expertise has served a broad spectrum of public agencies, institutions, private developers and corporations.

Ms. Rodriguez has been responsible for planning and design of Disney's *Celebration*, EYA's *Clarendon Market Common*, Greenvest's *Cameron Station*, Xerox's *Lansdowne*, Lerner's *Dulles Town Center*, Shooshan's *Liberty Center*, and landscape guidelines for Peterson's *National Harbor*. She is currently planning and designing LCOR's *North Bethesda Town Center*, UTC's *University Town Center*, Magruder's *Summerfield Metro* in Prince George's County, Mill's *Potomac Center* in Prince William County and a score of urban infill projects throughout the Washington metropolitan area.

Ms. Rodriguez is fluent in three languages, is LEED certified, and is an active member of the Urban Land Institute as well as the ASLA, and AICP.

**B. Campbell Smith**  
**Trammell Crow Company**  
**Washington, DC**

Mr. Smith is responsible for sourcing new deals and managing projects through the entire development process, including initial concept planning, design, financing, construction, leasing, and disposition.

Mr. Smith's strong background in finance and acquisitions, combined with his attention to detail and disciplined approach to project management, helps ensure that the client's interests are protected throughout the development process. He is known for his ability to interface with clients and the development team to ensure compliance with all contracts, schedules and budgets.

Mr. Smith has served as Vice President since 2006. Prior to that, he served as a Development Manager from 2005 to 2006, and as a Senior Associate in Corporate Development from 2002 to 2004. He was a Project Manager for Trinity Associates in Greenwich from 1996 to 2000.

He received his MBA from Stanford University, Graduate School of Business, in 2002, and received a BA in Economics and History, summa cum laude, from Duke University. His professional affiliations include memberships in NAIOP, Northern Virginia Chapter and NAIOP, Maryland/DC Chapter, the Urban Land Institute, and The Real Estate Group.

**Michael G. Stevens**  
**Capitol Riverfront BID**  
**Washington, DC**

Mr. Stevens is the executive director of the Capitol Riverfront Business Improvement District (BID) in the southeast waterfront area of Washington, DC – one of the city's most rapidly developing business centers and urban riverfront neighborhoods. He also recently helped coordinate the Center City Action Agenda 2007 – a community planning process that created a new strategic framework to guide development and public investment in downtown DC and its adjacent center city neighborhoods over the next ten years.

Mr. Stevens has been involved in the economic development, urban planning/urban design, and downtown/neighborhood development fields for the majority of his 30-year career. His work experience has included public planning agencies, private architectural and planning firms, nonprofit organizations, and business improvement districts. From 2000-2006 he served as the President & CEO of the Washington, DC Economic Partnership and helped build the organization as a partner in the District's economic development initiatives.

As Vice President of Development for the Center City Commission in Memphis, TN, Mr. Stevens was project manager for numerous downtown development projects including the new AAA baseball ballpark (AutoZone Park), as well as the administration of the agency's financial incentives. While Director of the Office of City Planning he helped create the first BID in Jackson, MS as a part of the implementation agenda of that city's Downtown Redevelopment Plan.

As the City of Dallas' Historic Preservation Officer Mr. Stevens led the effort to create the city's first historic preservation plan and was responsible for the landmark designation of over thirty (30) individual structures as well as seven (7) historic districts. He also participated or led a variety of neighborhood revitalization planning efforts in Dallas.

Mr. Stevens has participated in numerous downtown redevelopment efforts for cities such as Wichita, KS; Lubbock, TX; Dallas, TX; Nashville, TN; Memphis, TN; Jackson, MS; Washington, DC; and San Antonio, TX. He has also served on advisory panels for the Urban Land Institute and the International Downtown Association.

He holds a Master's degree in Urban Planning/Urban Design from Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA, and a BA in Urban Sociology from Millsaps College in Jackson, MS.

**Yolanda Takesian  
Kittelson & Associates, Inc.  
Baltimore, MD**

Yolanda offers 20 years of transportation planning experience focused on bridging engineering, planning, urban design, and economics to build walkable, comfortable, transit-friendly communities. She leads Kittelson's work in community transportation planning. Her collaborative approach creates plans that are technically, financially, and politically achievable. Prior to joining Kittelson & Associates, Inc., Yolanda served as Assistant Chief of the Maryland State Highway Administration's (SHA) Community Design Division, as Senior Planner for the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), and as an Urban Planner for Anne Arundel County. She has taught courses in Context Sensitive Design for State DOTs in California and Maryland and has received industry awards for innovation in transportation solutions.

Yolanda has led a broad range of strategic and comprehensive plans designed to improve transit station areas, their access by all modes, and the attractiveness of the transit service to users. She advises agencies in policy, process and program solutions to enhance transportation options and leverage private investment.